FOLKLORE IN THE MASS MEDIA

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As the accompanying cartoon (see Appendix) suggests,[1] the disclosure of the powerful phenomenon known as the "media" in contemporary society is analogous to the opening of Pandora's box. It would seem that the media, a relatively new societal force, has literally "sprung up," full-grown, in some mysterious fashion to the surprise and bewilderment of many -- and the consternation of a few -- and become a dominant influence in our culture. Moreover, in keeping with the mythological analogy, it may be safe to assume that the artist equates the media with the societal ills which were released at the touch of Pandora's hand. Whether the media is indeed a general evil in present-day American society is debatable; what is to be briefly discussed here, however, is its effect upon, and how it is affected by, folklore. Based upon the small sampling of data collected in this study, I would tentatively hold that the media's influence upon and use of folklore has undergone a great change. In the 1920's and 1930's when American society seemed to be in need of some kind of folk image as a means of self-definition and identification, the media graciously obliged; the result was a virtual inundation of the "fakelore" typified by the "folk hero" tradition of a Paul Bunyan or a Johnny Appleseed. Today such figures still inhabit the media. Yet as far as I can tell, contemporary media is less concerned with the invention and promulgation of non-traditional lore and more concerned with traditional texts used in various contexts. This change may signify a change in contemporary values or modes of thinking which help shape -- and yet are shaped themselves by -- the media. This shift in attitude will be discussed more fully after a consideration of the collected texts.

Before examining the forms of media and the functions of each with regard to folklore, let me give a brief account of the nature of the collection and the circumstances behind it.[2] The collecting was as broad as possible conceding certain situational limitations. That is, I tried to get a representative sampling of various types of media, and seemed to have succeeded in some respects and failed in others. For instance, there is, on the one hand, a relative abundance of printed material, including magazines, newspapers, cartoons, novels, and the like, yet on the other hand, a comparative lack of radio and television exempla. Obviously, both of these forms play a tremendous part in our everyday life, and this scant representation is not intended to suggest that folklore is not recognizably present in these forms. It reflects, instead, the fact that I neither own nor have easy access to a television set as well as the fact that the subject has been ingeniously and thoroughly covered in Tom Burns' article, "Folklore in the Mass Media: Television," appearing in the Folklore Forum of July 1969. Much of my findings, barring changes in individual commercials and shows, would be very similar to his. Moreover, the collecting here was done over a three-month period, over a broad area, in a more casual manner than was Burns' concentrated TV watch. However, some of Burns' observations and terminology, especially his concept of a "true" folklore item, will be discussed in this paper. Specifically, the forms represented in this collection are the following: magazines catering to different

interests; newspapers; Sunday magazines; plays; television; radio; cartoons; greeting cards; records (pop, folk, classical, rock); illustrations, such as book and record jackets; posters; films; novels, local festivals and customs; children's books and coloring books; advertisements; trademarks; names of places, such as restaurants, inns, and camps; crossword puzzles and games; and various miscellany such as linguistic folklore (puns, dialects, etc.) and a curious chain letter I received in the mail. I would like to emphasize the presence of rock and classical record titles and jacket illustrations; this seems to be a relatively unnoticed source of folklore -- especially with reference to the supernatural -- which is currently growing.

Other areas have been omitted because of lack of time and opportunity although I am sure that one could identify folklore in the following forms of the mass media: comic strips, billboards, speeches, cookbooks and recipes, the backs of cereal boxes and other products, pamphlets describing various American tourist attractions and landmarks, recorded tapes for tourists, placemats and matchbook covers from restaurants and gift shops, bumper stickers, and other miscellany. All of the above seem to be prospective areas of interest to the folklorist interested in mass media folklore. The data included in this collection, nevertheless, does cover the emphases of folk study: custom, belief, traditional oral lore, folk song, material culture; these areas of study seem to cross media lines -- one area is not confined to a particular form of media. Noticeably absent is a report on folk gesture, an area more easily seen in the visual media than in print (although some examples appear in cartoon form). In addition, because the market is flooded with material on the occult sciences and the black arts, I have kept data in these areas to a minimum, trying only to give a representative over-view of the topics; a visit to almost any bookstore will serve as a supplement to the information here.

Needless to say, all collected items are not equally folkloristic. Some more than others conform to the specifications of "true" folklore as suggested by Burns. To Burns, a traditional text alone is not sufficient to make an item valid folklore. Other criteria must be met; they are: 2) "a traditional performance of that text in (3) a traditional (customary) situation in response to or in conjunction with (4) a traditional audience." Inasmuch as the "mass media" is not considered a "traditional situation" by most standards it is rare that an item will satisfy that criterion. Granted, in television, it is possible to have a context within the media itself which is fairly traditional -- a group of people, oblivious to camera or audience, sitting around on a talk show telling tales, for example; however, with the exception of taped live performances on record or radio, few other vehicles of mass media folklore can provide "traditional" situations. Although each item should be individually considered to determine its traditionality, it is both possible and desirable to make some broad generalizations along this line with respect to the way folklore functions in the media as I have observed it.

I have arranged the folklore items found in the media in three main categories: (1) Folklore qua Folklore, (2) Folklore as Folklure, and (3) Folklure as an Aside. An outline showing subdivisions follows:

I. Folklore qua Folklore
   A. Articles about folklore
   B. Folklore as foundation
   C. Mimetic folklore

II. Folklore as Folklure
   A. For selling purposes
   B. For decorative purposes

III. Folklore as an Aside
   A. Incidental -- stylistic devices
   B. Purposeful -- for various effects
   C. "Metafolklore"

Generally speaking, items included in "Folklore qua Folklore" tended to best meet the criteria for true folklore -- especially a group of items under the heading "Articles about Folklore," which includes television programs such as "Hee Haw," and magazines such as Tournaments Illustrated: The Chronicle of the Society for Creative Anachronism; Consortium Antiquum; and The Mother Earth News. (Copies are found at the end of the collection.) It will be noted that all of the above have a restricted audience which is at least devoted to folk interests, if not catered to the folk themselves. Folklore texts in this first category tend to be ends rather than means -- the second approach being characteristic of the two other general divisions; moreover, a logical result of the above is that the folklore here tends to be less adulterated, less fragmented, more easily recognizable. A few collected texts in this category merit attention. A most interesting article from the Cincinnati Enquirer is found on the first page of the collection.[3] According to this article, a Japanese legend which has recently come to light states that Jesus Christ was not crucified nor resurrected but rather lived in a small secluded Japanese village until the age of one hundred six. Without informant data and variant texts it is difficult for the folklorist to attach much significance to this report. Yet it certainly does awaken curiosity and open up possibilities for collecting this and other like "legends" dealing with deviations from standard religious beliefs and doctrines. Perhaps there is a whole series of unorthodox Christ legends which have not yet been uncovered. Moreover, the area where the legend originated, Northern Honshu, which is described as being "noted for the persistence of strange superstitions and beliefs," deserves study itself.

On the second page, an article entitled "Mythed Again" uncovers the concern of the science fiction fan with the definition of various folklore terms, such as myth and legend. This article is included to show the ways in which groups other than folklorists are concerned with and define terms basic to folklore study. Three articles follow dealing with witchcraft: the first with the modern-day reaction to it, the second as a testimonial, the third as a local testimonial which was brought to my attention by an Indianapolis radio broadcast the day the article appeared. Another article which demonstrates the way folklore is talked about is "The Always of 'Once Upon a Time'" (date and place of publication unknown). In this article, Daniel Roselle advocates a renewed interest in folklore for contemporary ultra-sophisticated society. His basic premise is that the folktale and its counterparts can play a major part in the necessary restructuring of contemporary values, for essential to oral tradition is the belief that values do exist, that there are answers to

man's questions. Because there is little moral relativism or nihilism in folklore, it becomes a positive force: "St. George may not have slain the dragon, but man's regeneration may well depend on believing that someone can."

Following this is a typical folkloristic article which appeared in Redbook last December which depicts the history of Santa Claus. Expectealy, folklore is often more prevalent in the media around traditional holiday times. An ABC television broadcast on April 6,1971 was a good indicator of how modern folklore originates and how the media can influence and accelerate the traditional process of the growth of a folklore item. On "The Eleventh Hour News" a five-minute segment was devoted to Lieutenant William Calley's rise to the status of a folk hero. The explanatory narrative was accompanied by the recently recorded "Ballad of Lieutenant Calley" which, according to the broadcast, had sold one million copies within a week's time. The Ballad was sung to the traditional tune "Battle Hymn of the Republic." Also mentioned was a similar recording sung by Nelson Sings entitled "Cally's Hymn" which likewise extolled Calley as an American martyr, as well as a recording in which Calley was being denounced as un-American (the title of which was not given). The sale and content of the records would indicate that folk sentiment was being expressed and that the American people were most concerned and conscious of what constituted the traditional view of an American. The phenomenon demonstrates how naturally legends of national events originate and are accepted in addition to how "saleable" folklore is on the modern market. Articles about folklore in this category which have more to do with material culture can be found in the magazines accompanying the collection; note, for example, "The Sheepherder's Wagon," and the "Indians' Herbal Answer to the Pill," in The Mother Earth News (No. 3); or Tournaments Illuminated (Vol. 3, No. 3) which contains "The European Sword to 1600" and "On Courtly Poetry."

The second subdivision here is "Folklore as Foundation." The folklore contained within these articles serves as a basis for making a point or creating an effect, but it is not concerned with perpetuating, explaining, or discussing folklore per se. This section seems to be that which contains the most variation of forms -- greeting cards, books, records, articles, advertisements, movies, plays, television shows, posters. This diversity would indicate that although there appears to be a large amount of material dealing with folklore as an end in itself, the greatest bulk of the folklore found in the media is not folklore for its own sake, but for something else's, i.e., folklore is used as a most dependable communication vehicle. This is a logical development inasmuch as anything founded in folk tradition is by nature not esoteric and is likely to be understood by most of the masses. Interesting subtypes crop up in this division. "Scientific sorcery" (for want of a better term) is the name I have given to that type of material which combines science fiction and folklore. Such material, which combines past and future (the present is inevitably excluded) by using age-old folklore motifs and figures with futuristic plots, is seen in various popular novels as well as in many current rock songs. Fritz Leiber's novel, Gather Darkness, is representative of this trend:

> All humanity is gripped in a seething atmosphere of deadly dictators, perverse priests, wandering warlocks and supernatural scientists...Then the Witches! Revolt plunges the Second Civilization into a mad struggle for survival...

This "genre" is deserving of further investigation.

Folklore used as a foundation often is geared only to the past, however. Note the old Sears and Roebuck catalogues which have become extremely popular of late, the Covered Bridge Festival of Park County Indiana, the Madrigal Dinner at I.U., the "Beasties Coloring Book" (found at the end of the collection), various movies such as They Shoot Horses, Don't They? and Little Big Man, as well as the song "The Court of the Crimson King" which includes such folkloric elements as the wheel of fortune ("the grinding wheel"), divining signs, and hoaxes -- all enveloped in traditional philosophy and the setting of the King and his court. In such forms, much interest in material culture and customs is discernible. The same pertains to the magazines The Mother Earth News and Tournaments Illuminated which have been previously mentioned. One article, in contrast, does deal with the present: "The Golden Twig" from Harper's explains how magic and superstition are the prime movers as far as the world of Madison Avenue is concerned. Here magic, "the most common denominator of all," is "truly the universal tongue"; it is, consequently, the most cogent means of persuasion. Clearly, magical thinking as Mr. Gossage describes it, abounds and permeates various aspects of our culture, especially advertising. How else can one satisfactorily explain the ubiquitous presence of genies or mephisto-like figures who appear at will to help or hinder the befuddled housewife? or the charms and taboos implicated in connection with using or not using a particular product -- a toothpaste, for instance? or the myriad of jingles and slogans which reach incantatory proportions? The consumer is perpetually enchanted -- in every sense of the word.

A different use of the term myth is found in the article discussing Jung's theory of the mythical archetype and collective unconscious. Here folklore is used as a foundation but in an extremely unconscious -- or unintentional -- manner. Such is also the case, I believe, with various journalistic accounts which purport to be fact but which are, in truth, legendary accounts which are only barely related to the truth. Well-known examples are reports of the stolen grandmother and a recent report in the Indianapolis Star which tells of a man who fell out of a plane over Indianapolis because he opened the wrong door when trying to find the restroom (date of publication unknown). A great deal of the folklore which is used as foundation is mimetic, in the sense that it imitates, or is a take-off on folklore itself. What I have termed "mimetic" folklore, which constitutes a third category under the heading Folklore qua Folklore, appears most commonly in greeting cards and television shows where the stereotyped conception of the American hillbilly or backwoodsman is the most popular subject, usually dealt with in a humorous vein. Cowboys, Indians, and folk heroes are often used in a like manner.

The second section of the collection deals with folklore as "folklure". There seem to be two main functions of folklore portrayed in this manner -- selling and decoration. Advertisements figure the most prominently in this section. Some of the "lure" is more direct than others. An indirect way of using folklore to sell, a "soft sell" so to speak, is evidenced in the Health-Tex and Ben Pearson advertisements. Both attempt to trace the history of a folk item in relation to their product -- Health-Tex with a minimumly-related item (a piggybank), Ben Pearson with the very item intended to sell. The Ben Pearson ad manipulates folklore

most ingeniously. "Loser take all" in typical märchen form relates how a 12th Century yeoman invents the English longbow out of sheer desperation. The title underscores the basic parody involved: the loser is he who must marry the princess, "an unpleasant girl with a bad complexion and foul breath...and a dark mustache." "By all the Trolls in Danelaw," Keir asks, "what am I to do?" "Build a better bow," was the answer. Keir does just that. The contest takes place and the hero wins. The tale ends as Keir's opponent, "Hugh Berwyn broke his bow over his knee and everyone cheered because they believed he was sacrificing his beloved weapon as a token of love for his new wife. Everyone thought that. Except Keir. He knew better." As with masterful innovations in days of old, so today with Ben Pearson's progressor, so the ad implies as it assumes the grandeur of epic proportion.

Nevertheless, folklore has perhaps affected advertising the most through fashion. Today's dress is either peasantlike or fashioned on older styles. What is interesting in the examples from Glamour and The New York Times is the variety of countries represented in the American fashion melange. There are "Mexicanish" bikinis and Balkan dresses, for example. Needless to say, the fashions do not in any real sense constitute true folklore -- they are neither traditionally made nor sold to the folk, nor used for traditional festivals or celebrations. Yet the "folklore fashion" phenomenon does reflect a general awakening with regard to the peasant and his simplified life style. The same appears valid for the folklure which is designed for decorative purposes. Cybis Porcelains is one of many companies which reproduce folklore figures originating in myth and legend; yet the porcelain is so un-folk-like in form, cost, function, and audience that it can only claim to be tengantial folklore on the basis of subject matter alone. Many mail order houses also have begun producing items with folkloric associations. At low prices, one can obtain a replica of King Arthur's sword or a piece of Early American furniture, such as a table or spinning wheel. Even the names of such companies, such as Pegasus, are indicative of the popular emphasis on folklore. The advertisements for the Dragon Inn in Bloomington are similar indications. Another way in which folklore may be used to lure is found in the movie, Grimm's Fairy Tales, where, unfortunately, folklore is perverted to the utmost for perverted tastes.

A third way the media uses folklore is as an aside. The folklore may be incidental or purposeful and important for making or stating a point, or creating an effect (very often a humorous one). Incidental folklore is usually a stylistic device and consists of allusions, metaphors, similes, and references which are folkloristic in nature: the loose use of the term legend in the Time article about Hell's Angels is an example. Words often used in such contexts are: myth, legend, fairy tale, epic, folklore, Paul Bunyan and other traditional names and phrases. Often the audience and the performer or the writer and the reader are both unaware of the folkloristic content of such remarks; thus, this type of folklore would appear to be the most removed from Burns' criteria as true folklore items. Folklore is also used consciously for effects, however. Thus, Michener in his article about Kent State makes his point about rumors by using the words "dark folk tales." On a Lawrence Welk show, an effect is created and many Mexican-Americans are pleased by the intentional structuring of a show around Mexican dance and music. An effect is often consciously produced by distorting a name of a folklore figure or of a tradi-

tional or proverbial phrase: note the two different effects created in the advertisements "The Wizard of Avis" and the movie which bears an advertisement which is a grotesque pun on the nursery rhyme "Humpty Dumpty." George Harrison of the Beatles surrounded by trolls on an album jacket cover produces the bizarre setting suitable for his lyrics. Included also in this category are those "metafolkloric" items as Burns defines them, i.e., those questions posed on television quiz shows or in crossword puzzles or anagrams which deal with folklore.

Moreover, folklore as an aside often consists of what I have termed "anachronistic humor" -- humor which results from the juxtaposition and interaction of the real and the imaginary or, as often, the old and the modern. Here, traditional beliefs, customs, characteristic figures, and gestures intrude into contemporary mass culture often producing simple humor or trenchant satire. Although I am sure this phenomenon could be found in other printed sources, such as editorials and feature articles, as well as on television curing commercials and comedians' routines, the examples in the collection are all in cartoon form, mostly taken from The New Yorker Magazine. A few merit description. In one, behind a huge desk, sits an angelic-looking businessman (with a PR's smile and composure), complete with magic wand in hand and traditionally fashioned fairy wings pinned on the back of his suit. The single word LOANS on the huge sign which looms above him provides a terse yet fitting comment on contemporary attitudes and practices. Implied here may be the tendency of modern man to let his fantasy and magical bent intrude on reality to the extent that he may not see things as they are. And/or, however, it may suggest the opposite. It may suggest that even a fantastical creature assumes and must assume a more practical, down-to-earth mien in present-day society if the creature is to be comprehended at all. Another cartoon which suggests how the staples of folklore, i.e., fable and tale and legend and myth, are divorced from contemporary thought, how humorously "anachronistic" they appear, shows young Jack about to trade his cow for a handful of beans. In this version, the owner of the magic beans is "selling" the beans with contemporary suavity in the contemporary idiom: "Here are your beans, young man, and if you are not completely satisfied your cow will be cheerfully refunded." Somehow reality intrudes upon imagination and ultimately destroys it. We feel we have lost something. Might it be the capacity to fantasize, to allow imagination to soar, untouched above (in Thoreau's words) "our dullest perceptions"? A third cartoon juxtaposes the fairy-tale and modern worlds, emphasizing with humorous irony, it seems to me, their divergent concerns. A chemist diligently working in his laboratory is startled by an upstart frog who croaks, "I hope you are working on an antidote for my spell." Such exempla serve only to hint at the multi-faceted nature of anachronistic humor, to suggest some "perhaps" with regard to the interrelations of the motifs of folklore with those of modern life.

An interesting addendum to this section is the chain letter I received in the mail.[4] The letter may not be classified as a form of mass media folklore; yet having been circulated throughout the world nine times, I think it does qualify as some means of mass communication and so I have included it here. The intermingling of religion and superstition and the implied jinx or hoax if one does not continue the chain is of interest to the folklorist -- especially to the student of modern folklore.

Some general observations should be made with regard to the present collection. Subject content is varied; there are items concerning myths, legends, tales, folk dialects and gestures, folk dances and festivals, customs, beliefs and material culture. Curiously, the American mass media does not focus primarily or even secondarily on American folklore. One is surprised to note that although George Washington, Abraham Lincoln, Casey Jones, Daniel Boone, and The Good Fairy pop up in diverse contexts, there is no concentration on the American folk hero or folk tradition. Instead, the American mass media tends to center around folk cultures in various countries of the world. Perhaps because mythology is now a standard form of reference in the sense that allusions made to the mythology are widely understood, there are many references to classical mythological gods and beasts. Moreover, it is interesting to note that although there are not many fairies or supernatural beings other than ghosts and witches embedded within American tradition, the mass media contains folkloristic figures from disparate traditions: included are trolls, fairies, unicorns, dragons, mermaids, and other unidentifiable gremlins or sorts. Moreover, the American media also evidences a marked proclivity towards past epochs in other countries' histories. Consequently, there is a plethora of material in all three categories on medieval culture especially witchcraft and supernaturalism in general. Instead of focusing on various epochs of the American past, for example, the Twenties or the Civil War, the media's attention is directed towards life in another country, in another era.

Areas of American folklore which do manage to permeate the international folk milieu in the media are the hillbilly and, in particular, the American Indian. Much material, especially concerning dress and custom, is focused on the Indian. However, here one notes a certain change in the type of folklore present. It is a self-conscious folklore, that is, it seems to be an area which has been singled out and played up for particular reasons. The most obvious reason seems to rest on the fact that the American people are becoming sensitive to and cognizant of the plight of the American Indian and the history which led to his marginal existence. The mass media seems to be largely responsible for this heightened sense of interest and concomitant guilt experienced by the American public. Consequently, one is exposed to movies such as Little Big Man, a movie which David Denby (writing in The Atlantic) asserts "is probably as close as sophisticated men can come to a genuine folk version of the Old West" wherein "the obvious tall tales show up the less obvious absurdity of what we were once asked to believe in." Not only are we witness to the reversal of the traditional roles of "good and bad guys" with regard to the Indians and Whites, but to the blackening of traditional Americana as well: articles such as "back to where you belonged" in The Underground denounce the whole traditional American image (that based on the tough, indefatigable, invincible pioneer) as imperialistic and somewhat more than embarrassing -- downright shameful. In an age hoping for peace and reason rather than brute strength and machinations, a Johnny Appleseed becomes much more acceptable than a Daniel Boone or Paul Bunyan. The sharp decrease in the number of westerns "consumed" daily or weekly by the average American television or movie viewer is ample evidence of the change in attitude.

The change of values appears to be a manifestation of a general discontent with present-day society -- its complexities, its tensions, its mistakes. The "anachronistic humor" found in many of The New Yorker cartoons high-

lights many of the ills of present society at the same time showing how ludicrous contemporary practices would be in former times and how divorced modern man is from any kind of "fairy tale" existence. Thus, in contrast to previous years when folklore was used by the media to foster and reinforce a traditional image, to unify the people, or to pass on tradition, i.e., when it was an outgrowth of nationalistic feeling, contemporary American folklore is more international and universal in scope. It speaks to all men, not only Americans. It is concerned with the peasant in Yugoslavia, for example, or the American Indian for two reasons, as I see it. It is an escape from urban mass culture to a simplified life style, and it is a ramification of the growing concern for the downtrodden and the poor -- those that suffer, according to popular views, at the hands of that society. The present interest in occultism and medieval supernaturalism and philosophy supports this thesis also. An article in the collection entitled "What's Behind the Occultism Craze?" expressed the most commonly-held views on the subject; it states that throughout history men have looked to magic, to the stars, to intuition when empirical study or science has failed to solve their problems. Societal malaise regenerates superstitious tradition. In a sense, the folklore as found in the media is meant to be a psychological magic wand; it can systematically inform and directly instruct one to revert to a simplistic life style, or it can subtly suggest that the world is somehow based on unreal forces over which one has no control anyway. It can thus serve as an escape, conscious or otherwise. Then again, it may also serve to demonstrate that society has become too technologized to ever become "folk" in nature again, and, ironically, that the current emphasis on folklore and superstition which are sought as aids, only serve to further complicate and obscure the issues (a point of view prevalent in the more sophisticated or intellectual magazines). Thus, media folklore can be seen as a panacea or an obfuscation. But the prevailing opinion seems to be that folklore, which embraces and celebrates the traditional past, is a most trustworthy guide through the labyrinth of contemporary and perhaps future society.

NOTES

1. Reprinted with permission of The New Yorker Magazine, Inc.
2. All folklore items referred to in this paper are contained in said collection, which has been deposited in its entirety in the Folklore Archives of The Folklore Institute, Indiana University at Bloomington.
3. See Appendix for a reproduction of this article.
4. See Appendix for copy of this letter.

APPENDIX I

Articles about Folklore (Legends)

"Jesus of Honshu: Legend Says Christ Born 27 B.C., Lived to Age 106 in Japan," Enquirer, Aptil 21, 1971.

Dispatch of Times, London. Tokyo -- A Japanese legend has excited some curiosity here, that Jesus did not die on the cross outside Jerusalem, but lived in a remote village on the northern part of the Japanese island of Honshu until his death at 106 years of age.

The legend came to light with the discovery in 1935 of an old document by Hiromaro Takeuchi of Isohara, in Ibaraki prefecture.

On the strength of its contents, Takeuchi visited Herai (now Shingo), the name of the village in which Jesus was supposed to have lived, and uncovered two burial mounds that he took to be those of Jesus and his younger brother, who is also mentioned in the document.

Some time afterward, another document was found in a house in Herai. This purported to be a copy, preserved and handed down from generation to generation, of writing left by Jesus when he died.

Jesus, so the legend runs, first arrived in Japan at the age of 21 during the reign of the Emperor Suinin in what would have been the year 27 B.C. He remained for 11 years under the tutorship of a sage of Etchu province, the modern Toyama prefecture, from whom he learned much about the country and its customs.

Jesus returned to Jerusalem, passing through Monaco on the way, to tell his own people of his experiences in the Orient, it is said. It was his younger brother, known in Japanese as Isukiri, who was later crucified, according to the legend.

Jesus is said to have escaped and come back to Japan after wandering through the wastes of Siberia. The legend has it that he landed at Hachinoe, in Aomori, and settled in Herai, whose name, it has been suggested, derives from the Japanese for Hebrew (Heburai).

He married and became the father of three daughters, according to the legend.

After his death, Jesus's body is said to have remained exposed to the elements for years on a mountain. His bones were later collected and buried in the village, the legend says, along with the ears and hair of his brother, which he had brought with him when he fled from Palestine.

The two supposed burial places are still reverently tended by older residents of the village, who seem to be convinced of the truth of the legend. An annual "Christ Festival," held on June 10, attracts many visitors.

One family in the village says it is descended from Jesus. Many of the children have the "Star of David" sewn on their clothes, and parents sometimes mark the sign of the cross in ink on the foreheads of children to

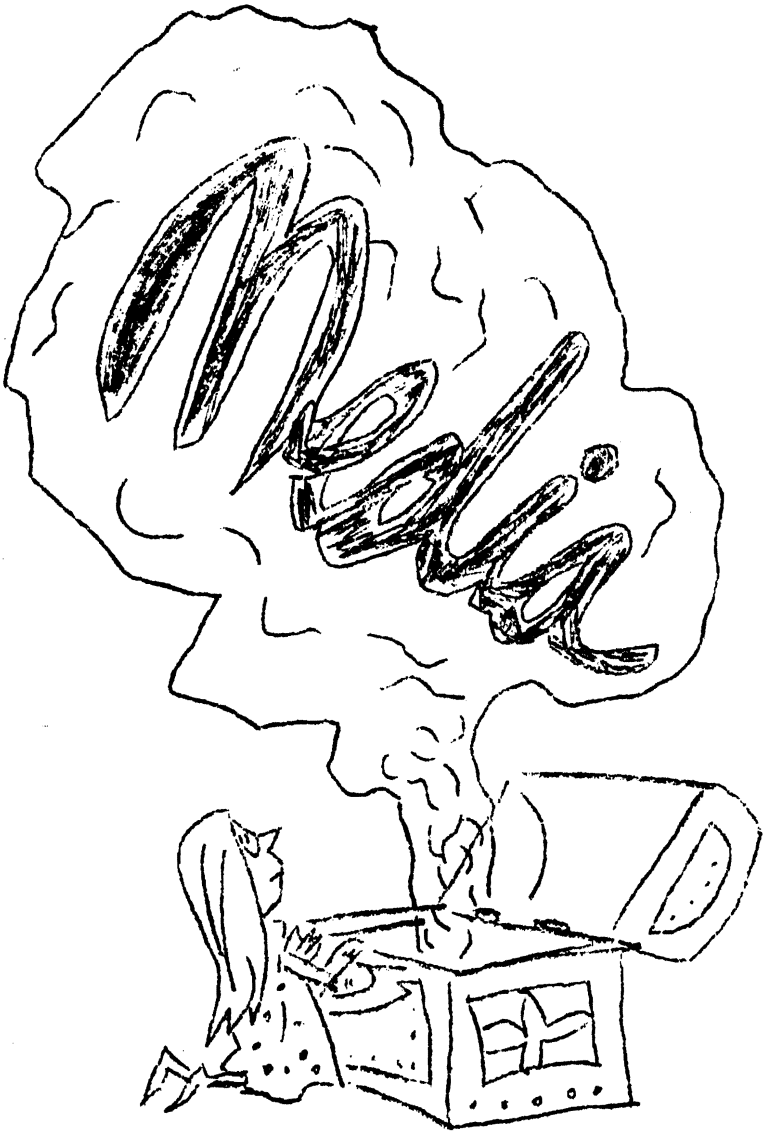
exorcise evil spirits.

Northern Honshu, with its remote and scattered farming villages, is noted for the persistence of strange superstitions and beliefs.

Folklore as an Aside: Folklure

"Trust in the Lord with All Your Might, and All will Acknowledge Him and He will Light Your Way"

This prayer has been sent to you for good luck. The original copy came from the Netherlands. It has been around the world nine times. The luck has been sent to you. You are to receive good luck within four days after receiving this letter. It is no joke. You will receive it in the mail. Send 20 copies of this letter to friends you think need good luck. Please do not send money. Do not keep this letter. It must leave within 90 hours after you receive it. A U.S. officer received $7,000.00. Don Elliott received $69,000.00 but lost it because he broke the chain. While in the Phillippines [sic], General Walsh lost his life six days after receiving his copy. He failed to circulate the prayer. However, before his death he received $775,000.00 he had won. Please send 20 copies and afterwards see what happens on the fourth day. Add your name to the bottom of the list and leave off the first name when copying the letter.



Drawing by Lorenz; © 1971
The New Yorker Magazine, Inc.

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